

Week Ending Friday, January 12, 2007

**Statement on United States Military
Personnel Recommendations
From Secretary of Defense
Robert M. Gates**

January 5, 2007

I am pleased to accept the recommendations of Secretary Gates for several key positions in our Nation's Armed Forces. These leaders are accomplished military professionals whose experience, skill, and dedication will enable them to successfully lead our troops as they protect our country.

General George Casey has been a strong and effective commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. I have come to depend on his wise counsel and solid judgment in our efforts to protect the American people in the war on terror. I look forward to working with him in his new role as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. General Casey will succeed General Peter Schoomaker, who has done an outstanding job in helping transform the U.S. Army to confront the challenges of the 21st century. I wish General Schoomaker all the best as he retires from active duty after a distinguished career.

Lieutenant General Dave Petraeus will succeed General Casey. General Petraeus is a soldier of vision and determination. His service in Iraq has equipped him with expertise in irregular warfare and stability operations and an understanding of the enemy we face. I am confident that General Petraeus has the right experience, leadership skills, and judgment to be an outstanding commander of MNF-I.

Admiral William J. Fallon, currently the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, has earned a reputation as one of our country's foremost military strategists. His experience and leadership will be critical to helping our country achieve victory over the radicals and extremists who threaten freedom. He will be an excellent commander of U.S. Central Command.

Admiral Fallon will succeed General John Abizaid, who has overseen some of our military's most extraordinary efforts to spread freedom and democracy. He has earned the respect and admiration of a grateful nation, and his service is a model for those who wear our country's uniform. As he retires, I express my deep appreciation for all he has done for America.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Memorandum on Assignment of
Functions Regarding the Citizens
Health Care Working Group**

January 5, 2007

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Health
and Human Services*

Subject: Assignment of Functions Regarding
the Citizens Health Care Working Group

By virtue of authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, the functions of the President under section 1014(o)(1) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-173) are assigned to the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
11:11 a.m., January 8, 2007]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on January 9. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

January 6, 2007

Good morning. Earlier this week, the newly elected Members of the House and the Senate took their oaths of office and became part of the 110th Congress. I congratulate them all, and I look forward to working with them over the next 2 years.

Since the November elections, I've had a number of productive meetings with the new leaders in Congress, including Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. I was encouraged by our discussions, and I'm confident that we can find common ground in our efforts to serve our fellow citizens and to move our country forward.

One area where we are already finding agreement is in our effort to spend the people's money wisely. This week, I announced that I will submit a 5-year budget proposal that will balance the Federal budget by 2012, while making the tax relief we passed permanent. Some Democrats have indicated that balancing the budget is a top priority for them as well. By holding the line on spending and continuing our progrowth policies, we can balance the budget and address the most urgent needs of our Nation, which are winning the war on terror and maintaining a strong national defense, keeping our economy growing and creating jobs.

We also see bipartisan agreement emerging on reforming the earmark process in Congress. Earmarks are spending provisions that are often slipped into bills at the last minute, so they rarely get debated or discussed. Many earmarks divert precious funds away from vital priorities like national defense and education to wasteful porkbarrel projects. I appreciate Democratic leaders who have pledged to maintain our current levels of spending without additional earmarks this year. And I support the temporary moratorium on all new earmarks announced by the Democrats.

This is a good start, but I believe we can do more. This week, I proposed my own earmark reforms, which would make the earmark process more transparent, end the

practice of concealing earmarks in so-called report language never included in legislation, and cut the number and costs of earmarks by at least half. These commonsense reforms will help prevent billions of taxpayers' dollars from being spent on unnecessary earmarks.

Another area where Democrats and Republicans can work together is in the effort to improve our schools. We have done so before. In my first year as President, Democrats and Republicans saw that our schools were failing too many students, so we worked together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. This good law gave our schools new resources, and in return, we asked them to show results. By setting high standards and measuring student progress, we're holding schools accountable for teaching every student to read, write, add, and subtract.

Since No Child Left Behind was passed, we have seen major improvements in student achievement all across America. In reading, 9-year-olds have made larger gains in the last 5 years of the test than in the previous 28 years. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test. And in both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher and starting to close the achievement gap.

This year, the No Child Left Behind Act is up for reauthorization. I'm confident that both parties can work together to help our Nation's students. By reauthorizing this important legislation, we can help make our schools a gateway to opportunity for every child.

With this new Congress and new year, Democrats and Republicans will have many opportunities to serve the American people. We must rise to meet those opportunities and build a stronger and more compassionate nation for generations to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.